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§13–503.

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Arthritis encompasses more than 100 diseases and conditions that affect joints, the surrounding tissues, and other connective tissues;

(2) As one of the most common family of diseases in the United States, arthritis affects nearly one of every six Americans and will impact an estimated 60,000,000 people by the year 2020;

(3) Arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the United States, limiting daily activities for more than 7,000,000 people;

(4) Although prevailing myths inaccurately portray arthritis as an old person's disease, arthritis is a multigenerational disease that has become one of the country's most pressing health problems;

(5) Arthritis has a significant impact on quality of life for the individual experiencing the painful symptoms and for the family members and caregivers providing for that individual;

(6) The economic and social costs associated with treating arthritis and the complications of arthritis are estimated at almost \$80,000,000,000 annually;

(7) Currently, the challenge exists to ensure delivery of effective, but often underutilized, interventions that are necessary in the prevention or reduction of arthritis-related pain and disability;

(8) The large quantity of public information and programs about arthritis remain inadequately disseminated and are insufficient in addressing the needs of specific diverse populations and other underserved groups;

(9) The Arthritis Foundation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials have led the development of a public health strategy, the National Arthritis Action Plan, to ensure the delivery of effective, but often underutilized interventions that are necessary in the prevention or reduction of arthritis-related pain and disability; and

(10) Educating the public and health care community throughout the State about arthritis is of paramount importance and is in every respect in the public interest and to the benefit of all residents of the State.

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